

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

no magic wand can be waved over Annamites to endow them with mercantile skill. Experience and training are needed, but even more a changed psychology and an appreciation of professional integrity.

The government, serving as intermediary between the two hitherto water-tight compartments, is now encouraging Franco-Annamite financial co-operation. It has long been a complaint of the Annamite bourgeoisie that whereas they have been docile about subscribing to the state's loans they have never been permitted to share in the profits of French colonial enterprises. To which the colonials reply that the Annamite bourgeoisie, in addition to being overbearing and self-important, have not the requisite knowledge. And when they are trained the natives forsake commerce for government jobs. They point to the case of one Annamite for whom the administration had cleared the way to directing an important enterprise. He was ruined by his innumerable family, the members of which are ever prone to fasten themselves leech-like upon any relative whose financial prospects are bright, and thus kill the goose before it can lay even the first golden egg. The depression has done little to solve the impasse, but for the present the problem is in abeyance. Though the Annamite bourgeoisie have not the virtues of the European middle classes, the creation of social groups based on wealth is for better or worse the product of Western colonization.

NATIVE REACTION TO FRENCH CULTURE

The scientific side of Western culture has been more easily assimilated by the Annamites than any other. Not that they esteem science above literature. On the contrary, for them the great man is the poet and

moralist. But the machine represents to them the sole unqualified justification for the Western claim to superiority. It belongs to the universal world of the senses and does not require for its understanding a special background. Science has an inter-racial common denominator: it is realistic and concrete, it is utilitarian and immediately profitable. The prodigious Annamite memory can grasp and retain its formulae, if not the point of view that made such discoveries possible. Literature is a much more indigenous product. It is the fruit of a people's experience and their attitude towards life.

The divergence between two racial cultures is nowhere more clearly shown than in the Annamite reaction to Western education. Chinese instruction was thoroughly utilitarian. Although the child absorbs a complete system of ethics* as part of the paraphernalia of learning, he